

Influence of Parents' Economic and Educational Status on Children's Learning

Panchalaxmi Prajapati ^a ✉

✉prajapati123pancha@gmail.com

^a Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University, Mahendra Ratna Campus

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Abstract

Economic and educational status of parents directly and indirectly influences the children's learning. This article explores Influence of Parents' Economic and Educational Status on Children's Learning. The study was conducted in Sudal area of Bhaktapur district where several people have migrated from several districts and have taken employment in several areas including brick factories. Qualitative research designed was used in this study. The population of the study included all head teachers, all teachers who taught in grade-3 and students of grade-3 at schools in Bhaktapur district and the parents working in the brick factories are population of this study. Out of this population, one school located in Chyamasing area was selected as a case. The study was further narrowed down to grade-3. This school's head teacher, one teacher who taught in grade-3, one grade-3 student and one parent of same student who is working in brick factory was chosen purposively as sample in this case study. In this qualitative case study, in-depth interviews and observations were conducted to understand parental activities and behavior in supporting their children's learning. This research concluded that not only economic and educational status of the parent influence children's learning but also positive behavior of parents toward the children, good relationship between parents and children, good parenting style, ways of motivation of parents, and positive feedbacks of teacher, remedial teaching, proper support from teacher's positively influenced their children's learning.

Keywords: Brick factories, feedback, labor, motivation, tahara

Introduction

Nepal is a country of multilingual, multi religion, multi-economical and multi-educational society. According to economic conditions, in general, people are classified into three groups: upper class, middle class and working class. Mostly, the parents of upper and middle class are educated and these parents are more involved in the education of their children in comparison to the parents from the working-class families (Panta, 2020). Several studies (CERID,1999; Neupane & Gurung, 2021; Shah & Anwar, 2014) have reported that parents' economical and educational status affects children's learning. Similarly, Zellman and Waterman (1998) emphasized mainly on parents' level of education, marital status and family income as the major determinants of the children's learning and they concluded that children from the parents of high and middle socio-economic status are provided a better learning environment at home than parents having low socio-economic. Likewise, Ngorosho (2010) conducted a study in the rural area of eastern Tanzania and came up with four major variables namely, parents' education, source of light, household materials and academic materials such as books as significant indicators essential for learning. Similarly, Neupane and Gurung(2021) indicated that parental socio-economic status and parent's level of education does not have significant relationship with academic performance but the occupation of parents has a greater impact on the academic performance. This study clearly described the family financial status, parents' level of education, parents' expenditure on education influenced on children's learning. The findings of this study relate to the claims made by Pierre Bourdeiu in his social capital theory, meaning that the parental engagement in children's learning is low in the families having lower educational and economical status. Mostly economic and educational status of the parents of government basic school was medium and low in Bhaktapur. Among them, the educational and economic condition of parents working in

brick factories were very poor. Parental education, economic level, occupation, social and educational factors affecting academic achievement of children. According to Bourdieu's social capital theory, learning level and academic achievement of students depends on the social capital inherited from the family. Panta (2020) claimed positive relationship of academic achievement and their parent's educational level. The children of parents of working class have lower academic achievement compared to other kids of parents with better socio-economic and educational status. Similar findings were also reported by studies outside of Nepal. For example, a study in Thimphu Bhutan among the government high school student reported positive relationship between the parent's literacy and academic performance of the children (Dekar, 2016).

Parents are the main educators until the child attends the basic level of school education. Involvement of parents in children's early education helps to develop the strong foundation in children education and it positively influences learning achievement of students. In spite of this, many parents do not get involved in their children's education due to the low socio-economic status. The parents of low socio-economic backgrounds do not involve in their children's learning. The integrated curriculum of basic level, grade 1-3 (2076) clearly describes that the involvement of parents is essential in children's learning and proper development. Similarly, the perception that parental involvement has positive effects on students' academic achievement has led to literature about parental involvement (Jeynes, 2003; Hill & Tyson, 2009). Children need support, encouragement, feedback and guidance from both their parents and teachers to achieve better performance. Likewise, parent's involvement is important for children's learning, attitude and proper behavior development. Children become successful students if their parents participate in school activities and support education and learning at home. But, there are so many challenges that affect the involvement of parents in their children's learning such as low income of parents, lack of education of parents, lack of proper knowledge of child care, lack of sufficient information on collaborative work of home and school.

This research was based on Bourdieu's social capital theory. According to this theory, learning level of student depends upon the cultural constructs inherited from parents. This theory describes those differences in family background leads to the differences in achievement of students. This is due to the accessibility of the education materials, support in homework from the parents of high economic status with high education than children from the parents of low socio-economic status with low educational level. Children from parents with good economic status are able to get better learning than that of the children from parents with low economic status (Shah & Anwar, 2014). Parents with good economic status can easily provide the essential educational material for their children and educated parents support their children's education directly or indirectly. Similarly, Machebe (2014) described that parental educational qualification and health status of student have direct relationship with the academic performance of the students. Except that, there are various factors influencing children learning such as caste, religion, gender, and occupation of the parents. Mostly, parents with high economic and educational status actively involved in the children's learning activities at home and in school activities. There is a big gap between students whose parents are actively involved in children's school activities and learning than those parents who are not. High socio-economic status of parents, positive and convincing families have a major influence in their children's achievement in school and through life (Henderson & Mapp 2002). Research report of ((Zellman & Waterman 1998; Suizzo, 2007) shows that proper parenting, proper guidance and encouragements is provided by parents having better educational status and its association in learning. Similarly, Panta's (2020) study showed that majority of students from low socio-economic status have poor academic achievement. Thus, parent's economical and educational status positively influences students' learning.

Nepal is a country with huge diversity in term of culture, language, economic status, educational status... of people. School is a microcosm of large society with children from various socio-economic and cultural background. Economic and educational background of parents and learning of students are interrelated to each other. Former researcher Panta (2020) claimed positive relationship of achievement of student and economic and educational level of parents. Similarly, Neupane and Gurung (2021) occupation of parents has greater influence on the academic performance of their children.

Statement of the Problem

The economic and educational status of parents is taken as an important element of children's learning. The report of National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCEN, 2020) describes various factors such as leadership capacity of head teacher, child friendly environment in school, good and qualified teachers, suitable curriculum,

supportive parents and society influence on quality education and learning of children. Similarly, research of Epstein & Sheldon (2001) showed children learn and develop through three overlapping spheres of influence: family, school and community. These three spheres directly affect the learning of students. Students who have positive supports from their parents at home show better learning at school, while students lacking support from parents' struggle.

I had already visited the government schools of Bhakatpur district. Some teachers told me that the students whose parents are educationally and economically weak have less involvement in school activities and their children's learning. Nepal government's education policies and plans also clearly described that involvement of parents was essential for upgradation of students' learning. Likewise, there is a provision of parents and teachers' association (PTA) in the 8th amendment of Education Act that aims to involve parents in children's learning and provides suggestion for quality education in school.

Economical and educational status of the parent plays significant role in the development of foundation of children's leaning. Educational policy and many research reports (CERID, 1999; NCEN, 2020; SN 2059 BS; SSRP, 2009) advocate collaborative work of parents' and school is essential for quality and practical education in basic level. If parents are not involved in children's learning; the internal and external efficiency of children decreases. But in practice, low economical and educational status of parents' less involvement in children's learning and finally leads to decreased learning achievements. Nepal government, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has invested large amount of educational budget in basic education to improve the quality of education and students learning but low economic and educational status of parents were less involvement in children's education is a main cause of poor learning in school. Thus, the large amount of budget invested in basic education was wasted. There is huge gap between government policy and achievement of students.

Most of research report claimed that low economical and educational status of parents negatively influence their children's learning. To improve the learning level of these students, school should organize awareness program mainly focusing on these parents to improve learning level of their children's, necessary of good communication between school and parents. Similarly, teachers should conduct extra classes, to provide positive and constructive feedback to the students etc. Likewise, local government should start provisioning the supply of essential goods in low cost for these parents and conduct skill training. These activities help to reduce the research gap directly as well as indirectly. If the research gap is reduced, it will definitely improve the learning of these students. My study finds how low economic and educational status of parent influences their children's learning and various ways to improve learning level of these students. The study aimed to explore the influence of parents' economic and educational status on their children's learning and ways to improve the learning level of these children's.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions in this study.

1. What is the current status of parents' involvement on children's learning?
2. How does economic and educational status of parents work in brick factories influence on children's learning?
3. What are the ways to improve the learning level of these children's?

Review of Literature

This section deals with the review of related literature. It discusses the various studies carried out by various scholars concerning influence of parents' economic and educational status on children's learning. Brief description of reviewed literature is given below.

Relationship between economic and educational status of parents and children's learning

Parents are considered as a main stakeholder in school education. Several researchers have explained that the socio-economic status of parents positively influenced on the children's learning. Parents of low educational

and economic status are unable to help their children's education and unable to invest sufficiently in the education of their children. Ahamad (2016) and Backer et al., (2017) concluded that poor and working-class parents primarily focused their responsibilities to provide for their children, such as food, clothing and housing. So, learning level of kids of these parents was lower than children of high socio-economic status. Apart from this, parental involvement on education also influenced on children's learning and academic achievement. The influence of parental involvement on education has been studied by difference researchers (Epstein & Sheldon, 2001). They conclude that parental involvement plays a pivotal role in the student's learning. Involvement of parents in the school and children's leaning help to promote students' success and achievement. The researchers show that children do better in school when parents involved in school activities and at home. There is no doubt parental involvement in child education improve the achievement of students so (Allen & Dally, 2002) described the parental involvement is a valuable component of any children's education but low economical and educational status of parents are unable to involvement in their children's learning. Thus, the learning level and academic achievement of their children were low than another student.

Zhang (2018) find out that, children from high economic status are able to perform better than the children from the parents with low economic status. Thus, the economic condition of parent's influence on the children' learning. Similarly, according to Bourdieu's cultural capital theory social class of parents' influence on children's education (Bourdieu, 1986). Likewise, the research report of Panta (2020) clearly described that the majority of students from the parents with low socio-economic status had poor academic achievement because of the parents are less interested in the education of their children as they give more priority on the employment of their children rather than their studies. The illiterate and poorly educated parents are unable to support their children in their educational activities. Except this economic status and educational level of parents there are many variables which affect the learning of their children. It is a well-established fact that economical and educational status of parents was closely linked to student's success at school.

Need of involvement of parents in children's education

Involvement of the parents in their children's education plays important role in academic achievement of children. Various documents, research reports of our country like: (SSRP, 2009; NCEP, 2020; SSN 2077) pointed the importance of parental supports for children's learning. In this Samshodhit Shikshya Niyamawali, there is provision of formation of PTA and parent should be involving in school management committee (SMC). In some schools, PTA is organized. The main objective of PTA and involvement of parent in SMC is to improve the interaction between parents and teachers to support student learning as well as solve learning related problems. In some cases, the PTA has strengthened the school activities by providing various supports.

Parental involvement can be classified into two general categories: school-site involvement and home involvement (Zellman & Waterman, 1998). They focused on measures of parent-school involvement: attendance at school events, participation on school councilor advisory committee, regular volunteer activities, involvement in PTA meetings. Similarly, home involvement includes helping in homework, good relationship, positive motivation etc. These factors directly or indirectly influence children's learning.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework is the researcher's understanding of how the research problem will be explored. It shows the specific direction of research based on the relationship of constructs and variables. Similarly, Maxwell, (2017) said "A conceptual framework may be defined more narrowly as the factors and variables address in a study." Based on the review of literature and my personal experiences, I have sketched a conceptual framework of this research as follow.

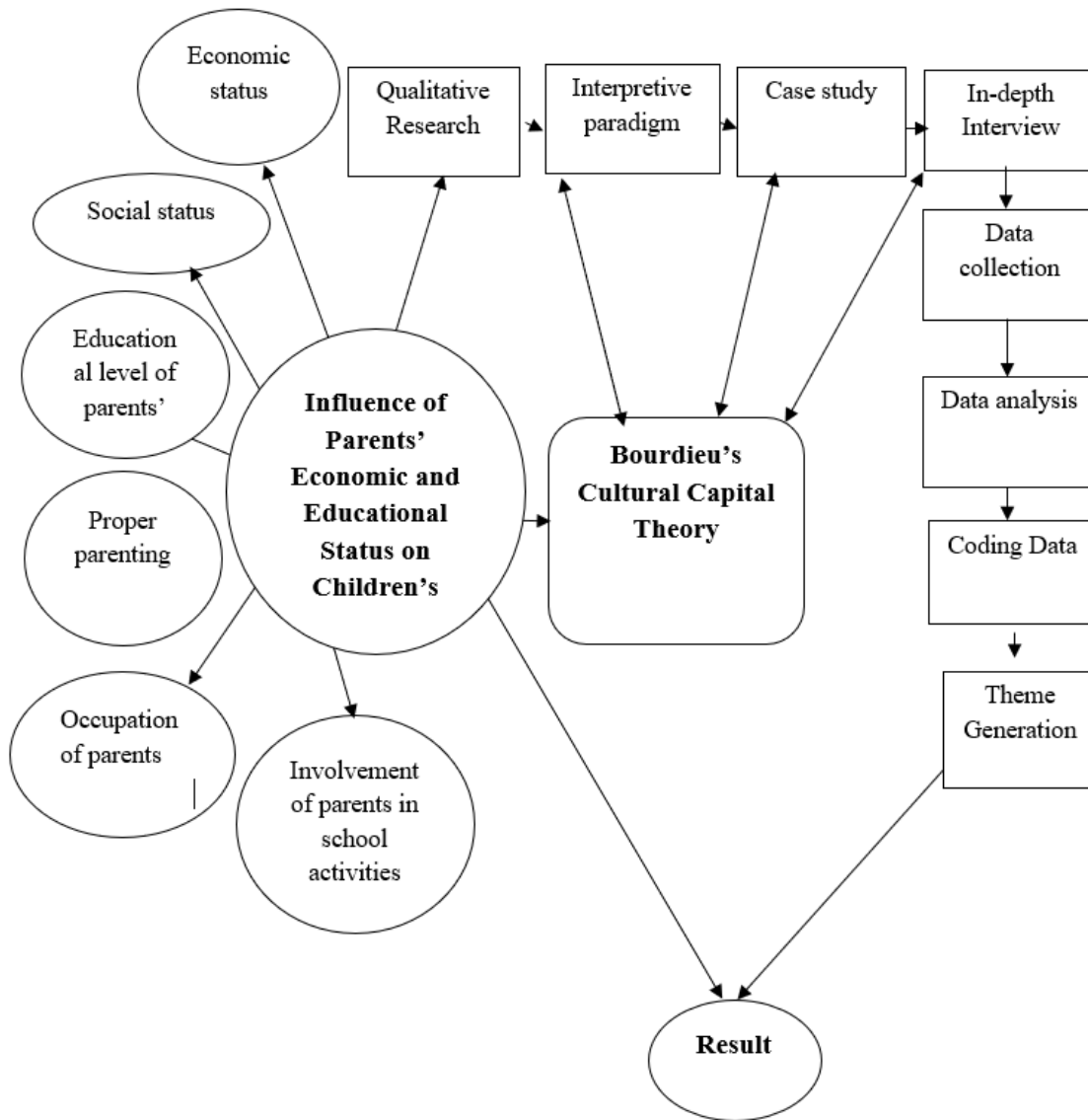


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Influence of Parents' Economic and Educational Status on Children's Learning

The figure illustrates relationship between several factors of parents and affecting students' learning. The conceptual framework includes methodological elements, theoretical element and factors affecting the parental involvement in student learning. There are various factors of parents' influence on children's learning such as occupation of parents, educational level of parent social and economic status, parenting style, involvement of parents in school activities etc.

Research Methodology

Research design

Research designs are blueprint for research operations that includes everything from broad assumption to specific data collection and analysis methods (Creswell, 2007). Main objective of this study is to explore the influence of economic and educational status of parents on children's learning. Case study research design is applied to achieve this objective. Case study method enables too closely examine the data within the specific context. Sample parent in this study was asked to provide more detail and thick answers regarding their economic and educational status influencing on their children's learning. Case study method gives us more information in their natural environment. Yin (2018) defines the case study research method "as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used." There are various methods of case study. Among them I used qualitative case study. This case study described a phenomenon in detail. They are used to develop an understanding of a complex issue. It provides detail and deep information from participants. So, this research design helps to achieve the answer of the above-mentioned research questions of this study.

Population, sample, and sampling procedure

Population is the pool of individuals from which a statistical sample is drawn for a study. Thus, any selection of individuals group together by a common feature is known as population. In this research, all the basic schools; all the head master/ head mistress of basic schools; all the class teachers of grade three, all the students of grade-3 whose parents are working in brick factory and their parent of Bhaktapur district from Province no. 3 of Federal Republic of Nepal are considered as the population of this study. I selected one sample school and one head master, one class teacher of grade 3, parent whose child was studying grade 3 who is working in brick factory, and their one children of same school as sample population. The purposive technique was used to select the sample.

Description about sample parents

I selected father and mother of grade 3 student of basic school Name of male parent was Ghanak Bahadur Tamang (pseudonym) and name of female parent was Phool Maya Tamang (pseudonym). Age of male parent is 35 years and female parent was 32 years respectively. Female parent was totally illiterate and male parents was literate. They have two children, elder one is son and younger one is daughter; age of son was 13 years and daughter was 10 years. Both are studying in same school in grade 5 and grade-3.

Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

Data collection refers to gathering information from multi sources by using different data collection methods to attain the objectives of research. In other words, data collection refers to gathering information from various sources through the application of multiple data collection methods to attain the objectives. Data related to the objectives of this study is collected by primary source. In-depth interview and observation was used to collect data. In –depth interview guideline was prepared and interview process was flexible and open ended in nature. I took interview with sample parents and I observed the natural learning environment in his or her home. Similarly, I took interview with head teacher, class teacher of class teacher of class three and sample student. Likewise, observation method was also used to collect factual and reliable data. I used diary book to keep the field notes and mobile set for voice recording of in-depth interview and discussion. I transcribed the recorded verbal data.

I used the general inductive method for analyzing the verbal data obtained from the research participants of my research. I prepared raw data files for coding the verbal data of interview transcript and field notes. Through the process of reading, reflecting and reading the text in detail until completely understood the created text. In this way, I categorized of codes according to research questions. After categorized of the codes of raw data according to my research questions; I analyzed the coded data. These reflect the participants' feelings, actions, and visions for influence economic and educational status of parent on children's learning. Triangulation of the data were used to maintain trustworthiness of the study.

Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the economic and educational status of parent influence on children's learning. Learning of kids is the collaborative process among teacher, parents and students. In this twenty first century, uneducated and poor parent also give more priority in education for their children. Most of national research report (CERID, 1999; Panta, 2020) and international research report Bhutan, and Doctoral thesis of (Zhang, 2012; Dekar, 2016) declared that the learning level of kids of highly educated and economically strong parent was better than another kids. Economic and educational status of parents is directly proportional to their kids learning. I asked the teacher about improving learning level of these students; she said "due to low economic and educational condition of parents; they are unable to help in their children's homework, difficult to provide conducive and supportive learning environment at home. We conduct extra class at leisure time for weak student as remedial teaching and we also manage the peer support to improve their learning. Intelligent student and weak student sit together. Intelligent student helps academically poor colleagues. Similarly, I provide positive feedback to these students." Surely, positive and constructive feedback and peer support directly and indirectly help to improve the learning level of students.

Likewise, I asked with head teacher about academic improvement of children of economically and educationally weak parents. Head teacher told me" teachers should play crucial role to improve the learning level of weak students. They should motivate the students toward learning. We discussed about academic improvement of

these students in parents and teacher meeting. Headmaster added, central government and local government should develop provision to supply essential goods in low cost for their parents and provide skill training, (Yesle Kehi Matrama Bhayapani Yesto Parents Harulace Rahat Milchha). Lastly, head teacher said the sample students was not weak in their academic achievement.

The economic status and educational status of sample parents were very weak but they understand the value of education. They inspire and support their children to focus in education. They supply essential goods and stationery for their children in time by reducing another expenses. These parents lived in Tahara with their children near the brick factory made by piling bricks without any window and roofing by zinc sheet. I observed activities of parent and children in there Tahara; I noticed there are good and harmonious relation among them. The father told me;

We have small home (chhapro) and Pakho Bari in village. So, we migrated to Bhaktapur for employment and to make better future for our children since 2074. We both are working in brick factory but we can't save money. Our monthly income is nearly Rs.25000. Similarly, his wife said "we get work in brick factory only 5-6 month. After this we are unemployed. At that time, we have to search other job; if we can't get other job; we suffer from many more economical problems. Sometimes, we have problem to buy essential extra books for children".

This research finding does not totally agrees the above research findings which are mention in previous paragraph. If low economic and education status of parent provides positive motivation toward their children in education, good parenting, clear and proper communication with children, support the problems of children then it positively impacts their children learning.

The entire information gathered from the multiple sources was analyzed by using Bourdieu's the cultural capital theory. This theory focused on the economic and educational status of parent influence on the children's learning. There are other factors of parents which influenced on children's learning such as behavior of parents, feedbacks and motivation of parents also influenced on the children's learning.

Study results depicted not only economic status of parents influenced on the children's learning but also influenced by the activities of the parents at home; good relationship between parents and children; support of the parents and teachers...etc. are the most influential factors for learning and academic achievement of their children. The research finding of Epstein & Sheldon (2001), involvement of parents in school activities and children's learning help to improve the learning level of children. But my research finding partially agree that low economic and educational status of the parent negatively influenced the learning level and academic achievement of their kids. Most of researchers found that low economic and educational status of parents are unable to invest sufficiently in the education for their kids. In context of our country, government provided free education, books and tiffin for school children so parents unable to invest sufficiently in education is not main cause of influenced on children's learning.

Likewise, Bourdieu's cultural theory also clearly described the economic status of parents positively influencing the children's learning. In present context, most of parents focus to provide quality education for their children. This research finding partially accepted the Buurdieu's cultural capital theory. Poor and working-class parents primarily focused their responsibilities to provide food, clothing and housing. Sample parent first preference on their expenditure for house rent (tahara rent), food, clothing and education. Sample parents are labor of brick factory; they are compelled to engage in longer working hour due to the low remuneration of their works. So it was difficult for them to provide time and attention to their children's learning as well as participates in school's activities.

According to Bourdieu's cultural capital theory socio economic status of parent's influence on their children's learning. But, in present context, most of parent's focus on their children's learning. The economic and educational condition of parents did not absolutely influence on their children's learning. This research finding also indicates that economic and educational status of parents is not the only factor that influence children's learning. Except this, behavior of parents toward children, positive motivation on learning, parent support to solve the problems of children, proper parenting play crucial role to influenced children learning.

Conclusion and Implications

This research concluded that not-only economic and educational status of parent influence on their children's learning but also positive behavior of parents toward children, good relationship between parents and children, good parenting style, ways of motivation of parents positively influenced their children's learning. Similarly, the role of school is most important among to improve the learning level of children. School should manage various ways to improve the learning level of these students such as: creating good relation between school and parents, conducting regular teachers' parents meeting, special and constructive feedbacks for these students, providing conducting remedial teaching etc.

Central and local government should develop following policy to help the improvement of economic condition of labor such as: supply of daily essential goods for low cost for low economic and educational status of parents, determining the minimum monthly wage for labors of brick factory, providing skill training... etc. Pedagogical implications concern with the methods of teaching and learning strategies for those students whose parents are economically and educationally very poor. It will be useful for the junior level school teacher who teaches socioeconomically backward students. This research helps to identify specific problems of these students in learning. Similarly, teachers should conduct activities such as: motivate the student toward learning, provide constructive feedbacks, remedial teaching, regular parents' and teachers meeting etc to improve the learning level of weak students. There are various other factors of parent that influence their children's learning in addition to economic and educational status. Following parental activities help to improve their children's educational achievement. Positive behavior, proper feedback, good parenting style, positive ways of motivation, mutual understanding among parents and children positively influenced in their children's learning.

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